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Foundations of Writing – Dr. Sherry

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**Student-teacher Relationships**

**Problem**

Throughout the years we have made gender stereotypes that have effectively impacted our society in some shape or form. One of the biggest stereotypes about the roles of men and women come from the Stone Age when it was believed that men were the hunters and women are the ones that take care of children. This stereotype has affected jobs that men and women take in the workforce. This paper focuses on the teaching career and student-teacher relationships in the classroom. In my paper I used sources like Huan (2012) *How Teacher-Student relationship Influenced Student Attitude Towards Teachers and School*, Lortie (1975) *Schoolteacher*, and Split (2011) *Teacher Wellbeing: The Importance of Teacher-Student Relationships* along with my own research to come up with possible reasons to answer the questions, do students have better relationships with male or female teachers and why they think this way.

**Background**

The book, *Schoolteacher*, by Dan Lortie, talks about the evolution of men and women in teaching careers in the Colonial Period and in the Nineteenth century. Back in the Colonial Period teachers were primarily males (Lortie, 8). Women were considered the minority because they only taught children that were homeschooled. Later in the 19th century the number of women teachers increased and men teachers became the minority (Lortie, 8). One of the reasons more and more women became school teachers was because back then there weren’t many jobs that women could do. “The major options they were faced were domestic service, employment in factories, and types of work which were extensions of feminine functions in the home – such as laundering and baking,” (Lortie, 8). So for women being a teacher was a better option for them to earn money for the family. The work that women were allowed to pursue can stem from the stereotype that women take care of the children while the men work.

In past studies, researchers have made observations about student-teacher relationships inside the classrooms in teacher perspectives (1). “Teachers tend to develop better interpersonal relationships with female students and also tend to view their relationships with them as less conflictual than they do with boys” (Huan, 157). Huan came to the conclusion that teachers got along better with the female students than with male students because there was less conflict between the student and teacher. Huan believes that female and male students both look for particular qualities that a teacher mast have in order have a relationship with. “Girls truly value qualities of nurturance more while boys tend to value dominance,” (Huan, 157) (2). This is another reason why female students get along with their teachers better than male students. Female students look to their teachers for support and guidance during their education years from their teachers while male students tend search for a way to be in control.

In Split’s research (2011), she finds that teachers need student-teacher relationships as much as students do because it creates an intrinsic reward that gives meaning to the profession, keeping teachers from quitting their job (Split, 458-461). Based on Split’s research, it is beneficial for teachers to form student-teacher relationships because it gives them motivation to continue being a teacher when the student succeeds.

The past research from Huan and Split contribute to who we make our relationships with. Huan’s research gives insight on who students might have a student-teacher relationship with while Split’s research explains why teachers keep relationships with their students and why they don’t stop forming them. When students are asked about student-teacher relationships do they say they get along with male or female teacher more? Do they know why they get along with male or female teachers better?

**Method**

In order to gain insight on student-teacher relationships I interviewed some students about their past relationships with their teachers. I asked both male and female students if they got along with male or female teachers and why they thought they got along with them. I chose this method because I thought it would be the easiest way to collect data.

**Findings**

I ended up interviewing three people, two boys and a girl. All three of them gave interesting answers that could help answer the big questions. Two students, one male and one female, said that throughout their education career so far, they have had more female teachers than male teachers. The other male student had more male teachers than female teacher throughout his educational career.

When I asked both the male students and female students if they got along with male or female teachers better all of the students said that they get along better with their female teachers. When I asked the male students why they thought they got along with their female teachers better they both said that their female teachers were easier to talk to and were friendlier. The female student said that she thought she got along better with her female teachers because she felt she could be more open with them easily (1). The female student also said, “I felt the female teachers were more nurturing and mothering which made her feel more comfortable in her classes” (2). Having teachers that are the same gender as you could also contribute to our reasoning for choosing male or female teachers to have a relationship with (3).

All of the students told me that the good relationships with the teachers motivated them to go to that particular class. They all said that they enjoyed the class because of the relationship they had with the teacher, not because of the subject.

**Conclusion**

Based on the interviews that I took from students and the previous research made by Lortie, Huan, and Splint I came to the conclusion that students get along better with female teachers than male teachers. According to students, female teachers are more nurturing and easier to open up to than male teachers are. This confirms that the research that Lortie conducted research about gender stereotypes could be a contributing factor toward our views about women teachers and why we believe that we get along with them better. This data could also suggest that not only female students value the nurturance we get from teachers but male students as well. To me, the stereotypes about men and women play a role in the student-teacher relationships that we make because our reasoning for getting along with a male or female teacher is based on these stereotypes even if it’s unconsciously made.

Works Cited

1. Huan, V. S., Quek, G. C., Yeo, L. S., Ang, R. P., and Chong, W. H. Chong (2012). "How Teacher-Student Relationship Influenced Student Attitude Towards Teachers and School." *The Asia Pacific Education Researcher*: 151-59. Print.
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